

Wang Hai samples 50
Sooul Korea April 21, 1903.
Hon. H. N. Allen *Board June 16 1903*
U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary
etc. etc. etc. *RECEIVED JUN 9 1903*

Your Excellency:-

I have just returned from a trip in the Provinces of Whanghai, the seat of the recent Roman Catholic disturbances, and while I learned very little of special value still, an account of my experiences may be of interest.

While in the City of Haiju I called on the governor of the province, Hon Yi Yong-jik. He is a genuine Seoul Yangban, short thick set and with a black beard. He received me with formal cordiality and our interview being free from the presence of other Koreans was a very satisfactory one. The Governor among other things told me that he thought the guilty people who are now confined in the provincial prison on proven crimes would probably be dealt with very lightly by Imperial orders. He said that both he himself and the Prefects throughout the province recognized the great difference between the character of the Roman Catholic converts and those of the Protestants. The latter he said were peaceful law-abiding people who never gave any trouble. I told him that I trust that in cases where any of our converts were accused before his tribunal he would not allow any plea to be set up on their behalf, but would fully and impartially investigate the matter. The only request I had to make was that they should not be punished until their guilt was first clearly proven.

I then called upon Mr. Yi Eung Ik the special Imperial Commissioner who investigated the R.C. troubles.

He said that his work was completed and his report prepared and that he would leave in a couple of days for Seoul to present it to the Emperor. He had about 20 or more Roman Catholic converts convicted of lawlessness, in prison, but he said that some of the heaviest criminals had escaped. He doubted if any heavy penalties would be inflicted, but that the degree of punishment would be determined by the Emperor.

The Commissioner was stopping in the Yamen of the Prefect of Hai-ju District, so I met this gentleman- Mr Yun Chu Yung and an old time acquaintance of mine. You may remember I introduced him to you ~~on~~ on the train one day. He inquired after your health and wishes to be remembered to you. He said the Roman Catholic matter was a most serious one. I told him of the rumor in Seoul that the French Legation Interpreter Mr. Ye In Wi, a Roman Catholic convert, was to be appointed governor of Whang Hai. He said they had already heard it in Hai-ju and if it was done it would be a very serious thing indeed for the peace of the province.

My own observation has led me to the following conclusions.

1. The non-christain people of the province are thoroughly aroused against the Roman Catholics for their behavior and are ready for any acts of violence. I do not think there will be any organized or widespread uprising against the R.Cs., but I do think they will be treated as bandits and felons generally and will have a hard time.
2. There was a general rumor in circulation that just as soon as the Imperial Commissioner left for Seoul, the police, soldiers and pedlars of Hai-ju were going to pay back some of the scores they had against them

I do not think there is anything in this rumor, but I do think that there will be local persecution of the R.C. Converts throughout the province, and that they will have to pay pretty heavily for their short lease of power.

3. Already the spirit of demoralization is entering the ranks of the R.C.'s. The rumor of the police-soldier-peddler uprising against them has frightened them. In the district of Su-hung their leader has been arrested and beaten by the Prefect while the local Peddlars Guild has seized and beaten a number of converts and extorted money from them. I had one application from an entire Roman Catholic Church to come over to us. I refused it. Mr. Cable informs me that he could easily gather in a thousand men from among the scattering R.C. people. This indicates the panic. A few are also going back to paganism resetting up their idols and fetiches.

In summing it all up it is clear that the native R.C. leaders went beyond all bounds in their defiance of Korean law and government. It is firmly believed by the people that this was done under the direction of the Foreign Priests and as a result both they and their cult are lastingly discredited before the people of the province. Indirectly this will bring great credit to the Churches under the American Missions as the contrast between the two cults has become almost unduly emphasized by the mistaken policy of the Roman Catholic priests. I do not rejoice in their fall. I am heartily sorry for it. I know that Roman Catholic Christianity has incurred an undeserved odium by the lawlessness of the native converts, but the situation has to be faced by them and it is a most serious one.

There is a nasty storm gathering about them. I do not anticipate that it will involve us. The feelings of the officials and people appears to be very friendly to us.

Very sincerely yours,

(Sig.) Geo. Heber Jones.